

RADICAL AZ:

A TIMELINE OF DIRECT ACTIONS
2010-2018



Arizona has a vibrant recent history of resistance. Overlapping struggles by anarchists, anti-fascists, anti-colonial and indigenous autonomists, border and immigration justice organizers, environmental activists, prisoners and prison abolitionists, anti-racists, and anti-capitalists have resulted in creative blockades, lockdowns, occupations, rowdy marches, clashes with the cops, and more rabble rousing than we could ever hope to list here. And while there can be no doubt that the diversity of our struggles and our communities is our greatest strength, sometimes the stories of our achievements and the lessons from our defeats stay confined to our particular activist organizations, crews of trusted troublemakers, or circles of friends. With this in mind, we would like to offer up this (surely incomplete) timeline of resistance and repression. We hope it can be used to position ourselves and our readers in an ongoing project against all oppression, as a tool in plotting our current rebellious trajectory in light of years of foundational work, as a documentation of what has been shown to be possible here, and as an indication as to what might be possible yet.

A note before we begin: While we have decided to include only actions that have taken place within the arbitrarily drawn political boundaries of the U.S. state of Arizona, there is nothing legitimate about these borders... or any other borders, for that matter. Arizona is stolen, occupied native land, and, more specifically, this publication, presently based in Tucson, is printed on stolen, occupied Tohono O'odham land. For a borderless world and an end to colonial occupation! Here's the timeline:

May 21 2010: Six people lock themselves together inside the lobby of Tucson Border Patrol Headquarters in an attempt to disrupt day-to-day operations. After arrest, all six later have their charges dropped or win their court cases.

July 29 2010: The southbound lanes of I-19 are blocked using tires covered in tar and broken glass as banners are dropped from above. A communique states, "This blockade is a temporary shutdown of the very road that is used to deport people deemed 'illegal' as well as a direct disruption of the flow of capital."

November 13 2010: The National Socialist Movement (NSM), a Neo-Nazi organization, attempts a march and rally in Phoenix. Twice as many anarchists and others disrupt the rally, and eventually come into conflict with the Nazis and the police who intervene to protect them. Police indiscriminately pepperspray demonstrators, media, and bystanders. In response, rocks and bottles are thrown at the Nazis and their police escort, a road is blockaded with improvised materials, and nails are strewn across the road in order to prevent police vehicles from nearing the protestors.



April 26 2011: A Tucson Unified School District Governing Board meeting to vote on removing Mexican-American Studies courses in high schools is cancelled after ethnic studies supporters storm the meeting room and chain themselves to the chairs of the board members.

October 17 2011: Police throughout Arizona attempt to evict local manifestations of Occupy Wall Street, an international movement critical of capitalism that utilized public space occupations as centers for planning and protest. Police arrest 53 in Tucson and 46 in Phoenix.

November 30 2011: Protesters in Phoenix attempt to disrupt the meeting of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a lobbying group that facilitates coordination between lawmakers and corporate interests. Police attack the demonstrators with pepperspray and arrest six.

January 24 2012: Following the indefinite termination of Mexican-American Studies classes in TUSD, hundreds of students in the district participate in walkouts, marching on TUSD offices during school hours.



February 17 2012: Marches decrying police violence take the streets in both Tucson and Scottsdale. Tucson marchers carry a banner that reads “For a World Without Cops or Jails.”

February 29 2012: Anarchists blockade the bus depot of private security firm G4S in an attempt to disrupt Border Patrol’s transportation capacity. Buses leave the facility daily to transport people detained by Border Patrol to court for sentencing or along I-19 for deportation. G4S is forced to cut down their own fences at the depot in order to get the buses out.



August 20 2012: A tree sit outside of Flagstaff halts construction of a sewage pipeline to serve Snowbowl, a ski resort under construction on unceded indigenous land.

February 17 2013: Tucson Police call Border Patrol on an undocumented motorist after a routine traffic stop. In an attempt to intervene, Raul Ochoa crawls under a Border Patrol vehicle to intervene in the detention of an undocumented motorist. Tucson Police subsequently pepperspray and arrest Ochoa.

July 21 2013: A group of undocumented youth later known as the “Dream 9” publicly attempt to re-enter the US after deportation or crossing into Mexico without documentation. The group is incarcerated for 2 weeks in Eloy Detention Center, but all 9 are ultimately released and granted asylum cases.

October 8 2013: Tucson Police call Border Patrol on an undocumented motorist and passenger after a routine traffic stop outside of Southside Presbyterian Church, a hub of migrant justice organizing. A meeting in the church quickly mobilizes nearly 100 people to oppose the detention, and TPD responds by attacking the crowd with pepperspray, batons, and rubber bullets.

October 11 2013: As a direct action, 12 people lock themselves to the buses carrying people in immigration custody to Operation Streamline—a daily proceeding that prosecutes people accused of immigration offenses en masse and sentences undocumented migrants to prison time before deportation. For the first time ever in Tucson, Operation Streamline is shut down, and the 70 detainees do not face prison time. Those arrested for taking part in the action eventually have their felony charges dismissed and are given time served for misdemeanor charges.



December 8 2013: Over 100 people march on the rural Border Patrol checkpoint on Arivaca Road, shutting it down for the day.

August 1 2014: Anarchists smash the windows of the G4S office in Tucson as an attack against a company that actively facilitates the detention and deportation of migrants and undocumented folks in Arizona.

August 11 2014: Tucson Police call Border Patrol after a routine traffic stop of an undocumented motorist. A group of people arrive to intervene, two of whom crawl under the BP vehicle to impede it before being arrested themselves.

November 10 2014: Anarchists throw paint bombs at the Mexican Consulate in Tucson, AZ and spraypaint graffiti outside the building reading "Vengeance for los normalistas and the 5E3." The action is claimed in solidarity with the 43 students disappeared by the Mexican state in Guerrero, as well as with the 5E3—Carlos, Amélie, and Fallon—three anarchists sentenced to over seven years in prison for insurrectionary attacks in Mexico City in 2014.

December 5 2014: Over 150 protesters march through the streets of Tucson following the non-indictment of the police officer who killed Eric Garner. The march takes over Speedway Boulevard led by a banner that reads, "The system isn't broken it was built this way: abolition not reform", and attempts to block the highway, but is repelled by Tucson Police with an LRAD—a sound cannon. TPD does, however, block highway traffic themselves in anticipation of disruptions from protesters.

December 14 2014: The first in a series of "fuck the police bar-b-ques" or "FTP BBQs" seeks to facilitate community discussion on the nationwide wave of resistance to racist police violence in a format that goes beyond protests and rallies.

February 7 2015: An encampment begins at Oak Flat to prevent the construction of a copper mine on traditional ceremonial Apache land. The encampment continues to the time of this printing, and mine construction plans are stalled.



May 1 2015: Anarchists in Tucson clandestinely attack law enforcement targets in solidarity with the ongoing rebellions against police throughout the country. Both the office of the Combined Law Enforcement Association of Arizona, a statewide association of police unions, and the office of the Tucson Border Patrol Local Union are vandalized with anti-police graffiti and have their windows smashed during the night.

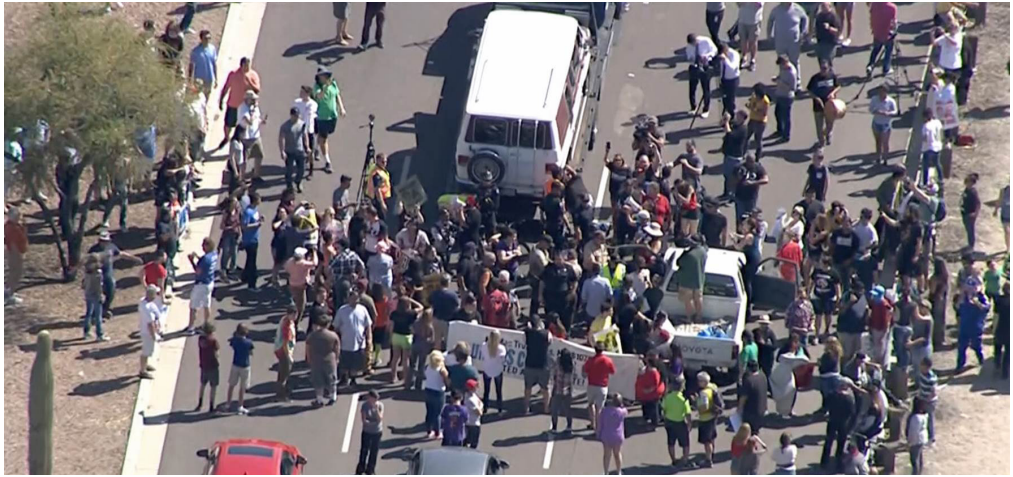
July 2 2015: Several days of unrest and rioting begin at a private prison outside of Kingman, AZ in response to violent corrections officers and poor conditions.

July 18 2015: A white nationalist rally outside the Islamic Center of Tucson is canceled after a widely distributed call-out for an aggressive counter-demonstration. The call-out emphasizes the need to stop white supremacist organizing by any means necessary, as well as an anti-colonial analysis in response to groups of white people claiming to be “taking their country back.”

February 11 2016: A march in response to the murder of transgender man Kayden Clarke by police in Mesa takes the streets of downtown Tucson. Participants, many utilizing the black bloc tactic (wearing all black and covering one's face, a tactic that is used to conceal identities from the police and that ideally empowers people to take risks and defend each other) drag signs and sandbags into the road to obstruct police.



March 19 2016: A Trump rally outside of Phoenix is severely disrupted when protesters block the highway leading to the event with a counter-demonstration, banners, and a blockade composed of cars parked across the road with demonstrators locked to the vehicles. Police racially profile the sole Latina arrestee, giving her an Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) hold and keeping her in jail overnight despite her status as a U.S. citizen.



June 12 2016: Queer anarchists disrupt Tucson Police Chief Chris Magnus's speech at a vigil for victims of a homophobic mass shooting in Orlando, seeking to remind the crowd of the legacy and continuation of police violence against the LGBTQ community. In response, TPD arrests two people for trespassing.

July 4 2016: White supremacist posters on ASU campus in Tempe ripped down and burned.

July 8 2016: A march of over 1,000 people in Phoenix protesting the police murders of Alton Sterling in Baton Rouge and Philando Castile in St. Paul is attacked by riot police with massive amounts of pepperspray and tear gas. Demonstrators respond by throwing rocks and bottles in an unsuccessful attempt to push through police lines and blockade I-10.

Early September 2016: Wheatpasted posters, graffiti, and a series of banner drops throughout Tucson, as well as noise demonstrations outside prisons throughout the state announce the beginning of the national prison strike—a prisoner coordinated work stoppage protesting the unpaid and underpaid labor forced on inmates. The strike would later spread to 24 states, and include over 24,000 prisoner participants.

September 10 2016: A prison strike solidarity march is pushed out of the streets and back onto the sidewalks of downtown Tucson by police after briefly blocking a few downtown thoroughfares with banners and construction equipment. A participant is grabbed for arrest by police when the march attempts to push back onto the street, but participants utilizing the black bloc tactic pull the protester back from the would-be arresting officer. No arrests are successfully carried out.

September 18 2016: In solidarity with the national prison strike, a group of anarchists and others blockade the road leading to the Correctional Officers Training Academy in Tucson, Arizona. Participants build barricades of chained together pallets, furniture and tires, adorned with banners reading "Free the Prisoners, Fire the Guards" and "No Pipelines, No Prisons" in order to block new recruits from arriving at the prison guard training center.

October 9 2016: At the culmination of a weekend of workshops for the School of the Americas Watch in Nogales, Arizona/Sonora, a group of hundreds marches onto I-19 in rural southern Arizona to intervene in the Border Patrol checkpoint that stops all northbound traffic to inquire about citizenship status. The checkpoint is incapable of functioning for over an hour, and activists interrupt normal operations for the entire day. No arrests are made.

January 20 2017: On the day of Trump's inauguration, a group of autonomous rebels, predominantly anarchists, attempt to blockade the railroad through downtown Tucson with the purpose of setting up an indefinite encampment. The action is inspired by similar railway blockades in Olympia, WA, in protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline, and in Nogales, Mexico, in protest of the Gasolinazo tax increases. Police attack participants with pepper spray and arrest one during unsuccessful attempts to build and maintain barricades on the train tracks.

February 8 2017: Seven people are arrested in Phoenix for blocking an Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deportation van with a detained, undocumented woman inside. After ICE successfully departs with the detainee, one hundred people briefly march into Central Avenue in defiance of police orders.

February 16 2017: At a march in Tucson called for by Lucha Unida de Padres y Estudiantes (LUPE), participants surround a police cruiser after the unprovoked arrest of a Latino protester. Police respond by physically attacking and pepperspraying those who remain in the street, and arresting three more protesters.



February 17 2017: The day after police attack the LUPE march, an already called for anti-Trump event takes on a particularly anti-police tone. Marchers, many in black bloc, take the street for over an hour, chanting "fuck the police" and carrying a banner emblazoned with the slogan "No Borders." The march ends with a brief occupation of the intersection of 6th Ave and Broadway where a Confederate flag is burned.

March 3 2017: A man escapes Border Patrol custody by fleeing a hospital in Tucson. An informal phone tree (that would later transform into a rapid response network to combat ICE raids and deportations) turns out approximately twenty people to follow and interrupt BP search attempts. BP began the search using a Tucson Police Department parking area as a staging ground, but were asked to leave by TPD after rapid responders arrived, citing the “recent political climate.” This may have been a reference to the bad publicity after the police attack on the LUPE march.

March 17 2017: Anarchists march in Tucson’s St. Patrick’s Day parade with an anti-prison float and a self-published magazine to distribute that declares “Treason to Whiteness is Loyalty to Humanity.”

June 15 2017: Border Patrol raids the medical-aid camp of humanitarian organization No More Deaths in Arivaca and detains four individuals receiving medical care—all of whom are later deported. In the aftermath of the raid, it becomes clear that the long-running medical camp is now being so heavily surveilled by Border Patrol that it can no longer serve its prior function as a the base of No More Deaths operations in southern Arizona.

August 10 2017: A caravan of 16 transgender women and gay men from throughout Central America and Mexico arrives at the port of entry in Nogales, Arizona to present their asylum cases. The caravan—the first to highlight issues particular to queer asylum seekers—is the result of collaboration between organizers on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border. Most members of the caravan are released on bond to fight their asylum cases, but one trans-woman, Roxsana Hernandez, later dies in an immigration detention facility in New Mexico from lack of medical care.

August 14 2017: An anti-colonial, anti-fascist contingent marches at a solidarity event in Flagstaff for anti-fascist Heather Heyer, recently murdered in Charlottesville by a white supremacist. Participants chant "Charlottesville to Flagstaff, always anti-fascist," and carry a banner reading "Fascism is not to be debated, it is to be smashed."

August 22 2017: A massive counter-demonstration to confront a Trump rally in Phoenix is attacked by police with pepperballs, tear gas, concussion grenades, and rubber bullets after demonstrators rattle police barricades that are preventing the demonstration from entering the street. Some present respond by throwing tear gas canisters back at police as well as rocks, bottles, and fireworks.



September 5 2017: Maktoob Hookah Lounge in Flagstaff is spraypainted with swastikas and partially burned as part of an islamaphobic, white supremacist attack. Flagstaff anti-fascists respond by hanging a banner that reads "We Will Defend Our Community" with a large, crossed out swastika in the city's main square.

November 22 2017: Opening day of the Snowbowl ski area outside of Flagstaff is disrupted by indigenous activists, who highlight the colonial nature of the ski resort's presence on the San Francisco Peaks, which are held holy by thirteen indigenous nations.



January 17 2018: No More Deaths releases part 2 of their "Disappeared" report series, documenting Border Patrol's systematic destruction of life-saving water and other supplies left by No More Deaths and other groups in the desert along the borderlands. Hours after the report's release, Border Patrol raids a rural southern Arizona aid location, arresting two migrants and Scott Warren, a No More Deaths volunteer. Warren now faces felony charges for "harboring illegal aliens."

April 23 2018: After a not guilty verdict for Lonnie Swartz, the Border Patrol agent who shot 16 year old José Antonio through the border fence in 2012, a crowd of 200 people shuts down busy downtown intersections in Tucson, eventually marching to the I-10 highway on/off ramps on Broadway and blocking all traffic for several hours. The crowd stands its ground when confronted with riot police and no arrests are made.

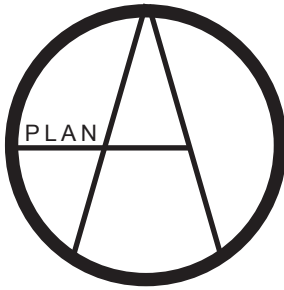
August 18 2018: Patriot Movement AZ, a far-right group using proto-nazi imagery, has their second event in Tucson in just two weeks disrupted by a crowd of anti-fascists that vastly outnumbers them. The PMAZ event was supposed to be a march, but instead they are kept in a small park pavilion and Tucson Police surround them to protect them from the large crowd of counter-protesters. After a small scuffle in the parking lot, people in black bloc assisted by unmasked companions pull back a few anti-fascists from their would-be arresting officers. No arrests are successfully carried out.

August 25 2018: A march of over 100 people calling for the removal of ICE from the Pima County Jail takes over busy thoroughfares in West Tucson before blockading the jail employee parking lots. The blockade is timed to coincide with the corrections officer shift change, so jail employees who are getting off work are trapped inside, and arriving employees have to be redirected multiple times before being forced to park in a nearby neighborhood. The blockade is maintained for two hours and no arrests are made.



November 21 2018: Lonnie Swartz is declared not guilty on lesser charges related to his 2012 killing of José Antonio. In response over 100 people spill into the busy Tucson intersection of Granada and Congress and block traffic in all directions. Later, demonstrators use bottles of wheatpaste and paintrollers that had previously been disguised as protest signs to glue a message firmly to the road: José Antonio Presente!





an arizona anarchist media project